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YALE COLLEGE,

SENIOR AND JUNIOR CLASSES

Subjects for Theses and Compositions.

1886.

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## I. HONOR THESES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE.

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[The notes and references attached to the subjects are intended only to give the first hint for the expansion and investigation of the subject. Prof. Sumner will be glad to give full advice on any subject selected.]

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### 1. Trades-unions, Strikes, and Socialistic Agitation in the United States between 1836 and 1840.

See Niles's Register.

### 2. Savings Banks.

Keyes's Hist. of Savings Banks.

### 3. Describe the existing consular system of the United States, and, regarding it as an attempt by the state to facilitate commerce, criticize it and consider its possible improvement.

Schuyler, American Diplomacy.

### 4. History of the Petroleum Industry.

Tenth Census, Vol. X.

### 5. History of Pensions in the United States.

### 6. The Theory of Probability in its Application to Social Phenomena.

### 7. Chinese Experience with Bimetallism.

Vissering, on Chinese Currency.

### 8. History of Legislation to Restrain the Intemperate Use of Intoxicating Drinks in Massachusetts.

Trace the changes and varieties through which this legislation has passed. Show its changing motive and purpose, the difficulties which have been experienced in administering it so as to accomplish its object, the successive attempts to overcome new difficulties. Deduce the results of the attempt to put a stop to intemperance in this way, so far as they are indicated in the history of the legislation.

### 9. Voyages of Adventure.

Their contributions to commerce and to human welfare. Lindsay's History of Merchant Shipping.

### 10. Explanation of the Rise and Prosperity of Venice.

Lindsay's Hist. of Merchant Shipping, I Chap. 8.

11. A Summary of the Acts of Great Britain in Restriction of the Industrial Development of her American Colonies.

Anderson's History of Commerce.

12. The Influence of the Conquests of Alexander the Great on Commerce.

13. Industrial Manias.

The Tulip mania. The South Sea Co. Law's Mississippi Co. Joint Stock Co.'s.

14. The History of Clocks.

15. The "Staats-Idee," State-ideal, *i. e.* a state's chosen Ideal of itself and its own development.

Is it a sound notion that a state has, or ought to have, a State-ideal? What is that of the United States? Why is it hard to translate "Staats-Idee" into English? Compare the two following views of it. The first is an argument to justify the forcible Germanization of the Polish provinces of Prussia.

"The government of every important state, which intends to secure internal peace and its own present and future power amongst its neighbors, must make its state-ideal the controlling regulator of all its actions. It must, by all lawful and proper means of administration and policy, assimilate those parts of the national whole which are not willing to conform themselves to the frame-work of the unified state, and it must coerce all separatist tendencies which are developed by the side of, or in antagonism to, the state-ideal. \* \* \* The process of assimilation cannot always be accomplished without apparent cruelty, and many a cry of pain shows that groups of the population have been torn from their accustomed and beloved routine for the sake of the state-unity. Prussia has a sore spot to which the lever must be applied [*sic*] to bring the state-ideal to its rights." Schmoller's *Jahrbuech.*, 10th year, 1st No., p. 91.

Is this the old argument for religious persecution? The American civil war is cited as a case of this doctrine. Is that true? Note that this passage comes from the school which protests against the application of "Procrustean" principles to political economy.

"The duty of the state is limited to and by those ends which can be attained by means which have already been ascertained and tested, and which can be stated, if they are called for. Love of one's neighbor, on the contrary, has an unlimited field. Love can operate by means of wishes, even though to love itself the attainableness of the wishes seems doubtful. There are no such things as wishes for the state. It has no ends whose attainableness is doubtful. We find in a speech of Bismarck the saying that "the end to be sought has been determined upon, but the means have yet to be ascertained." This saying is in hostility to the notion of the state. In the domain of the state's functions nothing can be admitted but what is practically possible, and nothing is practically possible but what has been found already capable of execution. The state cannot say such and such a thing is my end or aim, until it has fully ascertained that that thing can be attained, that is to say, until the necessary means have

been fixed upon. Statecraft has been defined as the science of the possible. This new "craft," which consists in state-craft plus a new series of social functions which the state is to assume [social-politik] constitutes a science of the impossible, so long as it is a science of the unproved [*i. e.* of ends whose attainability has not been shown, and whose appropriate means have not been ascertained or tested.] The fundamental institutions and instrumentalities of the state do not exist in order that experiments may be tried on them." Bamberger, *Gegen den Staats-socialismus*, p. 8.

Consider bimetallism as a case of the error described in the last paragraph.

## II. SUBJECTS FOR REQUIRED COMPOSITIONS.

### 1. The Cost of Peace and Quiet.

When is it right to conciliate dissatisfaction, and when is it wrong?

Consider the dissatisfaction of women, unenfranchised citizens, debtors, persons taxed for a state religion or for protection, employees, Irish tenants, etc.

### 2. Landlordism.

What is landlordism? Is there a corresponding creditorism, employerism, transporterism, bankerism, and other -isms? If so, what is the common element and common ground of all?

3. What is an "extortionate rate" for a patentee to charge for his article?

4. What is meant by "the industrial activity" of a nation, and how could the government stimulate it?

5. A Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, in spite of hard times, "the consuming power of the country had not diminished." What is the "consuming power" of a country, *e. g.* England?

6. What significance might attach to the fact that a citizen of Kansas sends his savings to be deposited in a Connecticut savings bank?

7. Discuss the element of luck or accident in the economic system.

Weather and natural incidents; chance discoveries; birth and education; the venturer; the speculator.

### 8. The Economic effects of Fashion.

Suppose that walnut and oak go out of fashion and mahogany and rosewood come in; that ladies cease to trim bonnets with ribbons and artificial flowers and use the bodies and wings of birds. Marshall, *Indust. Remuneration Conference*, 176.

9. Is there any rent on a natural gas well? Who gains the advantage of natural gas as a fuel?

10. Architecture as the Science and Art of Conveniently and Cheaply Housing the Population.

Is architecture so much dominated by the aesthetic interest that it fails almost entirely of serving the economic interest? What need is imperfectly satisfied?

11. The Hindrances to Economic Progress from Tradition, Custom, Dogmatism, and Routine.

12. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Prov. 11; 24.

13. "Industrial progress consists in obtaining the greatest possible inverse ratio between the consumption of circulating capital and the productiveness of fixed. The effort to be made to increase circulating capital is in the inverse ratio of the power of the fixed. The increase of circulating capital is in the direct ratio of the power of the fixed."

Guyot, *Science Economique*, p. 91.

14. Do the purchasers of Pullman cars pay for the extras at the town of Pullman?

15. Peasant proprietors in New England.

16. "In a country of small agricultural proprietors, hired labor is always absolutely and relatively dearer." Industrial Remuneration Conference, 383. "In a system of peasant ownership the wage receivers are often worse off than elsewhere." Ibid. 451.

17. When sugar became very cheap, American manufacturers expected a very great demand for light brown sugar. In fact the increase of demand fell almost entirely on first quality refined. What did this fact signify?

18. What are the effects on production and exchange of the negligence of buyers in the market to investigate quality or to exert themselves to sharpen prices?



The substitution of laws against adulteration for the vigilance of buyers.

### 19. Emigration.

It is affirmed that it is a disgrace to a country, that a great many of its people emigrate, because it shows that the government has not known how to find the policy which would enable the emigrants to live comfortably where they were born. Discuss this assertion, illustrating by the cases of emigration from Ireland, Germany and New England.

20. Is it true that the distribution of the product of labor now depends in any degree on the accident of birth?

J. S. Mill's Autobiography, 231.

21. What are the evils of employers' meddling with the personal concerns of their employees?

22. "Every man who works over-time four quarter days, takes away a day's work from another man."

23. "Invent a machine to double the amount of manual work to be done. That is the way to benefit the laborer."

### 24. The Blessing and Curse of Machinery.

A farmer, who had always done his own mowing by hand, bought a mowing machine. With it he did in one day what before took six days. He spent the other five days in laying a drain for which he had never before been able to find time. He rejoiced greatly, and, when asked why, said: "The machine does away with labor." Another farmer, who had hired a man to do his mowing by hand, also bought a mowing machine, after which he gave the laborer only one day's employment instead of six. The laborer lamented bitterly, and, when asked why, said: "The machine does away with labor."

What is the effect of machines? What deductions can be drawn from the above comparisons? Note the word "labor."

28. Does the introduction of more and more machinery into production render laborers more or less indispensable?

26. If machinery could be so perfected that apes could be trained to run it, what would be the effect on any industrial group, and on the welfare of the community?

27. Do the employees ever exploit the employer?

28. Arbitration in Disputes between Employer and Employee.

Legislation, instances, difficulties.

29. Why are retainers given in many professional employments? In what respect do they resemble wages?

30. "If laborers work seven days a week, it will soon take seven days' work to win six days' wages."

31. If wages are paid by a sliding scale, not according to market price, but according to the price which the employer is getting under his contracts, what will be the effect on the relations of a particular employer and his employees, and on his competition with other employers?

See the Forum, April, 1886, 122-3.

32. The Alleged Great Gains of Venturers.

If capitalists and venturers are making great gains, there should be a wide margin of opportunity for societies of co-operation in production. How do the latter succeed? What must be the inference as to the gains of capitalists and venturers? Does it follow that all which the venturers get out of the product is in it by virtue of their contribution to the enterprise?

33. "Under the wages system the employer is the banker and insurer of the employee. He advances the capital and guarantees the success of the enterprise. He makes the employee pay him big interest and big insurance rates."

34. Discuss Wages of Superintendence.

"The share which the venturer gets out of his product is won by him in virtue of the responsibility which he assumes for the success of the enterprise." What risk is in it, and what risk is not?

35. The Rise of the Proletariat.

The accumulation of capital having outstripped the increase of population, production must go on on a large scale, with a low rate of profits over an immense area, *i. e.* the whole population must be employed and abundant capital must be distributed to them in high rates of wages. Labor agitation, therefore, has a great chance of success. The economic situation favors wage receivers. They can win large wages and political power.

36. The Labor Problem Defined.

"All of which simply shows that the trouble in Belgium is one to which there is a constant tendency in every manufacturing country; namely, the increase of laborers beyond the limits of comfortable subsistence at particular points. As long as the limit is some distance off, there are no labor troubles at all. As soon as the mass of population begins to get near it, the labor question makes its appearance." Is any further limitation on this necessary?

37. "At the back of every great social evil will be found a great political wrong."

38. The State by Divine Right.

39. Is it socialistic to build roads at public expense?

40. Is it unjust that one man should be wealthier than another?

41. The House of Have and the House of Want.

Mr. George, who invented these names, says that the former is those who are satisfied with things as they are, and the latter is those who want to make reforms. Others say that it means: "The soil properly belongs, not to those who own it, but to those who want it."

42. The distinction between a Ground of Envy and a Grievance.

43. The "Banquet of Life."

Where is it? For how many is it provided? If it does not hold out, whose fault is it?

44. Is it any injustice to A that he is hungry, while B has more than he can eat?

45. A, who has no bread, claims that B, who has some, is morally bound to share with him. If this claim is true, what allowance must be made for it in defining the moral right of property?

46. The Philosophy of the Boycott.

47. Terrorism as a weapon of Industrial and Political War.

The Nihilists and the Czar. The boycott. Irish outrages. Parliamentary violence.

48. Private War in a Modern Civilized State.

49. "The wealthy classes are responsible for awful neglect of the poor."

50. The Greed for Wealth.

Is the greed for wealth manifested any more by the rich who have succeeded in getting it, than by the poor who have not? Has the greed of the former done any more to "plant a cancer in the heart of our civilization," than that of the latter?

51. "The state ought to provide its members with all the advantages which it is not possible for the individual to obtain for himself."

How might this be a sound doctrine very badly expressed? Criticize what it seems on its face to mean, and show why the ambiguity in it is mischievous.

52. "Men are worth more than dollars."

Is this a piece of real or bogus profundity?

53. "An injury to one is an injury to all."

54. "It will not pay to strike in the coming commonwealth."

Forced co-operation. What kind of commonwealth is that in which it will not pay to strike, and how will it differ from the present one in which it is assumed that it does pay to strike? The fate of dissenters in the coming commonwealth.

55. "The greatest enemy of the right and good is the better." "The greatest enemy of the necessary is the superfluous."

What facts have the speakers in mind? Have they misconstrued them?

56. The Solidarity of the Population of Great Cities.

Regarding a great city as a great concentration of labor and capital for some of the most essential tasks of civilized society, we see that the leaders in this work become very rich, while those who succumb to the temptations of city life, or are borne down in its competition, are reduced to misery. Could it be fairly argued that the former are bound to help the latter?

57. What inventions would tend to disperse the population of great cities over wider areas and to counteract the present drift of population towards cities?

58. The mediæval church held up an ideal of the higher life based on poverty, chastity and obedience. What is the attitude of political economy towards that ideal, if it takes cognizance of it?

59. What obligation rests upon the educated classes to instruct and persuade the mass of voters in a democratic-republic with universal suffrage?

See the view in various passages of Parton's Jackson.

60. Capital and Freedom.

The universal and eternal forces which man encounters in his earthly existence unceasingly utter to him these words only: Thou shalt toil and thou shalt re-

nounce. It is by obeying the injunction that man gains capital, and it is by capital only that he partially emancipates himself from his thralldom. That he was born free is therefore the greatest of errors. Whatever freedom he has is his greatest achievement.

61. The double non-sequitur that, because we cannot yet succeed in solving some case of clashing interests and unharmonized rights, we ought to put the case under state control, and that there is in our failure some ground of belief that the state will succeed.

62. Is political freedom growing faster, and is political power spreading faster, than self-control and rational self-subjection are being acquired ?

63. Discuss the dictum : "Where one man's rights begin, there another man's liberty ends."

64. The Mercantile Marine of Different Countries.

Exec. Doc. 172, 49th Congress, 1st Session.

65. The Antagonism between Constitutional Government and all Forms of Absolutism.

66. The Common Element in all Forms of Absolutism.

67. The Scholar in Politics.

Men who have tried this role have either (1) been forced soon to withdraw and resume the usual attitude towards politics of the class to which they belong, or (2) they have been drawn into all the old political methods. Seek exceptions. Why have the facts been as they are found ? Is the role an impracticable one in a democratic-republic ?

68. Finesse in Politics.

Politicians put no little of their art in the devising of laws which shall appear to satisfy the demand of some group which is, for the moment, clamorous ; trying to " keep the word of promise to our ear and break it to our hope," and in other ways to dupe those whom they dare not contradict or will not try to enlighten. Effect of this on political institutions. Note the denunciations of this proceeding and of politicians by laborers. Is the proceeding short-sighted ?

69. Personal Ambition in a Democracy.

70. Write a description of any industry about which you may be in a position to be informed.

71. The Career of Ferdinand Lassalle.



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